

BOOK REVIEW

JACKIE M. POOLE, WILLIAM R. CARR, DANA M. PRICE, AND JASON R. SINGHURST. 2007. **Rare Plants of Texas: A Field Guide.** (ISBN-13: 978-1585445578, ISBN-10: 1585445576, pbk.). Texas A&M University Press, Lewis Street, 4354 Texas A&M University, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.tamu.edu/upress, 800-826-8911). \$35.00, 656 pp., color photographs and maps, drawings, 5 3/4" × 9 1/4".

Texas Parks and Wildlife Department botanists, Jackie M. Poole and David H. Riskind, published their first report in 1987 about Texas' endangered or threatened plants. That listing included only 21 species. The authors began work on the new book in 2000. Over 200 species are identified and described as endangered, imperiled, or declining in the *Rare Plants of Texas*. Because most of these plants are too rare to be mentioned, much less pictured, in standard field guides, only a handful of botanists have known what these plants look like in their natural habitats.

Complete with photographs, line drawings, and county maps, this book describes the officially listed candidate and species-of-concern plants in Texas. Individual accounts include information on distribution, habitat, physical description, flowering time, federal and state status, similar species, and published references. The authors also provide brief introductory chapters on the state's vegetation regions; the history of plant conservation in Texas; federal, state, and other ranking methods; threats to native plants; recovery methods; and reporting guidelines.

This reference guide is a comprehensive and detailed look at the rare plants of Texas. The book will be primarily of interest for botanists and those laypersons seriously involved with the subject matter. Highly technical in nature and written in a dry academic tone, the excellent *Rare Plants of Texas* will not appeal to everyone. And it is not intended for a general interest audience but rather for agency personnel, non-governmental entities, environmental consultants, natural resource professionals, naturalists, academics, and anyone who needs to know about the listed, candidate, or species of concern plants of Texas.

After a brief preface and an acknowledgment section, there is a section on the various natural (vegetation) regions of Texas. This section goes into detail about the land mass and various types of plants typically found in the 11 regions, illustrated by a colored map of the natural regions of Texas. It is noted here that rare species are still being found today in Texas as much of the state has not been surveyed in the manner required to note and document everything.

Sections on the history of plant conservation, on the law and terms being used, and on the threats to rare plants which are primarily human-related are followed by the section on natural regions. This is followed by sections on "Management and Restoration of Rare Plants" and "Nomenclature and Species Selection." A copy of the official "Wildlife Diversity Reporting Form" issued by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to report a rare plant, animal or habitat, is also included, along with instructions for its use.

"Species Treatments" is the core section of the book. Each plant is depicted in a drawing, a color picture, and a location on a county map of Texas. Each plant has listed its scientific name, common name, family name, endangered status date, where it lives, and a detailed description of the plant, habitat of the plant, and comments and references on the plant. Listed in alphabetical order, each plant is detailed across two pages and depicted in multiple color photographs and ink drawings. Overall, 232 species of plants are illustrated with 247 color photographs, 234 color distribution maps, and 215 superbly rendered line drawings by artist Linny Heagy, who has been associated with the project since its inception in 2000.

Following the species treatments is a short section on what was excluded from this book and why. A very detailed glossary of terms, a 79-page reference section, and an extensive index of thirteen pages concludes this field guide.

Up until the last few decades, relatively little was known about most of the state's plant species in dangerous decline, thus making conservation action decisions difficult. Now every Texan has the opportunity to take the first step by recognizing exactly what we are in danger of losing.

This is a comprehensive book and is a well done reference guide that should be of interest to the professional as well as the general layman interested in the field. Those with a deep interest in the topic will appreciate it the most. For the readership it was designed for, it works well and provides a glimpse of the many rare plants found across the great state of Texas. The decision to use a flex binding, enabling readers to easily scan both pages devoted to each species without fear of damaging the binding, is heartily applauded by this reviewer.

"*Rare Plants of Texas* is a major contribution to knowledge about Texas plants. The detailed information about specific rare plants, excellent line drawings, and extensive photographs make this book indispensable to anyone wishing to learn about the numerous rare plants in the state," said George M. Diggs Jr., Ph.D., an Austin College professor of biology. "Further, anyone generally interested in Texas botany or conservation will find the carefully done introduction extremely valuable, with topics ranging from the natural regions of Texas to the history of plant conservation in the state."—Gary L. Jennings, *Botanical Research Institute of Texas*, 500 East 4th Street, Fort Worth, Texas 76102-4025, U.S.A.